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H.293

Introduced by Representatives Lanpher of Vergennes, Mrowicki of Putney,  
Anthony of Barre City, Birong of Vergennes, Bos-Lun of  
Westminster, Brady of Williston, Brumsted of Shelburne, Cina  
of Burlington, Coffey of Guilford, Dolan of Essex, Donnally of  
Hyde Park, Hooper of Burlington, James of Manchester, Noyes  
of Wolcott, Ode of Burlington, Pajala of Londonderry,  
Satcowitz of Randolph, Sheldon of Middlebury, Squirrell of  
Underhill, Stevens of Waterbury, Sullivan of Dorset, Townsend  
of South Burlington, Vyhovsky of Essex, Wood of Waterbury,  
and Yacovone of Morristown

Referred to Committee on

Date:

Subject: Executive; Agency of Administration; State Youth Council

Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to create within  
the Agency of Administration the State Youth Council to advise the Governor  
and the General Assembly on policies that impact young persons in Vermont.

An act relating to creating the State Youth Council

1 It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

2 Sec. 1. FINDINGS, PURPOSE, AND INTENT

3 (a) Findings. The General Assembly finds the following:

4 (1) Young Vermonters are one of our State's most important resources.

5 Youths under 21 years of age represent approximately 24 percent of the  
6 Vermont population and reflect Vermont's diversity. They are a group of  
7 dynamic, vibrant, and innovative individuals who are finding new ways to  
8 have their voices heard and effect the change they wish to see in the world.

9 (2) Multiple perspectives strengthen decision making and policy  
10 development by encouraging innovation, creativity, and change. Including the  
11 unique perspectives of young persons improves State policies and programs,  
12 including youth-specific services.

13 (3) Vermont's economy depends on the participation of young persons,  
14 and empowering them to provide policy advice will help keep young  
15 Vermonters in the State. It will also diversify our economy, making it more  
16 competitive and sustainable.

17 (4) Young persons have the right to be heard and respected. Almost all  
18 government policies and decisions have an impact on young persons' lives and  
19 youths have the right to influence those decisions, both individually and  
20 collectively. Furthermore, involving young persons in political processes helps

1 build trust in democratic institutions, which in turn protects Vermont's  
2 democracy.

3 (b) Purpose. The purpose of this act is to create the State Youth Council,  
4 composed of young Vermonters who will have an official means of providing  
5 advice on policies that impact young persons in Vermont.

6 (c) Intent.

7 (1) The intent of creating the State Youth Council set forth in this act is  
8 to enhance the State's progress in reaching the population-level outcomes set  
9 forth in 3 V.S.A. § 2311(b)(6) (Vermont's children and young people achieve  
10 their potential) and (9) (Vermont has open, effective, and inclusive  
11 government).

12 (2) The General Assembly further intends to consider the  
13 recommendations of the initial State Youth Council created in this act and to  
14 subsequently amend the Council's appointing authority, powers, and duties  
15 accordingly.

16 Sec. 2. 3 V.S.A. chapter 45, subchapter 7 is added to read:

17 Subchapter 7. State Youth Council

18 § 2331. STATE YOUTH COUNCIL; MEMBERSHIP; POWERS AND

19 DUTIES

1       (a) Creation. There is created within the Agency of Administration the  
2       State Youth Council (Council) to advise the Governor and the General  
3       Assembly on issues affecting young persons in Vermont.

4       (b) Membership. The Council shall be composed of not more than  
5       28 Vermont resident youths between 11 and 18 years of age at the time of  
6       appointment. The interagency workgroup Youth Services Advisory Council  
7       shall appoint members from an applicant pool with a focus on prioritizing  
8       diversity and inclusion, including characteristics such as county of residence,  
9       gender identity, racial identity, disabilities, age, and other characteristics  
10       identified by the applicants.

11       (1) The Agency of Administration shall assist the Youth Services  
12       Advisory Council in notifying the public regarding the opportunity for youths  
13       to serve on the Council, and the Youth Services Advisory Council shall accept  
14       applications for service on the Council. The application process should  
15       emphasize the need for diverse, qualified candidates. A successful candidate  
16       must demonstrate:

17               (A) a commitment to inclusion and the youths of the State; and

18               (B) the ability to work with others and listen to others.

19       (2) The Youth Services Advisory Council shall appoint members to the  
20       Council for three-year staggered terms and shall strive to appoint Council  
21       members who represent a variety of youths in the State. The Youth Services

1 Advisory Council shall consult with members of youth advocacy groups  
2 concerning initial appointments to establish the Council and then shall consult  
3 with the Council regarding appointments for all subsequent terms.

4 (3) The Council shall elect a chair from among its members.

5 (4) The Council shall establish an Executive Committee, ad hoc  
6 committees as needed, and the following standing committees:

7 (A) the Youth Voice Committee;

8 (B) the Education Committee;

9 (C) the Equity and Anti-Racism Committee;

10 (D) the Climate Change Committee; and

11 (E) the Youth Mental Health Committee.

12 (c) Powers and duties.

13 (1) The Council may:

14 (A) meet at least one time per month;

15 (B) hold up to four public hearings annually in order to take  
16 testimony on issues affecting Vermont youths;

17 (C) gather input from Vermont youths through surveys or polls; and

18 (D) evaluate the State's progress in reaching the population-level  
19 outcomes set forth in section 2311 of this title and recommend to the Joint  
20 Committee on Government Accountability any revisions to the population-

1 level indicators for those outcomes the Council finds necessary to better reflect  
2 data that impacts Vermont youths.

3 (2) The Council shall provide advice to the Governor and the General  
4 Assembly on policy changes necessary to improve the lives of Vermont  
5 youths.

6 (A) The Governor shall meet annually with the Council to hear and  
7 receive the Council's advice and recommendations on policies that impact the  
8 youths of Vermont.

9 (B) The Council shall annually report its advice and  
10 recommendations to the House and Senate Committees on Government  
11 Operations and to any other standing committees it deems appropriate. The  
12 report may be in verbal form.

13 (d) Assistance. The Council shall have the administrative, technical, and  
14 legal assistance of the Agency of Administration to assist with Council-  
15 directed activities, including:

16 (1) assisting with meeting scheduling and logistical support;

17 (2) providing information technology support; and

18 (3) providing any technology or technological devices necessary for the  
19 Council to perform its duties.

20 (e) Support. The Council shall also have support from the Youth Services  
21 Advisory Council.

1        (f) Attending meetings.

2            (1) Members of the Council may attend Council meetings by electronic  
3        or other means without being physically present at a designated meeting  
4        location as permitted under 1 V.S.A. § 312(a)(2).

5            (2) The General Assembly finds that such virtual meeting attendance is  
6        particularly expedient for Council members from remote areas of the State to  
7        participate in meetings, but also encourages Council members to be physically  
8        present at meeting locations when possible due to the importance of in-person  
9        interaction.

10          (g) Compensation and reimbursement. Members of the Council shall be  
11        entitled to per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses as permitted  
12        under 32 V.S.A. § 1010 for not more than 16 meetings per calendar year. For  
13        purposes of this subsection, “meetings” includes public hearings. These  
14        payments shall be made from monies appropriated to the Agency of  
15        Administration.

16        Sec. 3. STATE YOUTH COUNCIL; INITIAL PROVISIONS

17          (a) Appointments. The Youth Services Advisory Council shall appoint the  
18        initial State Youth Council created by Sec. 2 of this act on or before  
19        November 1, 2021. The initial appointments shall be for two- and three-year  
20        terms in order to provide staggered Council member terms.

1       (b) Training. From funds appropriated to the Agency of Administration, to  
2       assist with State Youth Council-directed activities and in consultation with the  
3       Youth Services Advisory Council, the Agency shall provide to the State Youth  
4       Council training on general State policies, how to formulate policy proposals,  
5       government operations, public speaking, meeting etiquette, and leadership.

6       (c) Duties. In addition to the State Youth Council's duties set forth in  
7       Sec. 2 of this act, on or before January 15, 2023 the Council shall recommend  
8       to the House and Senate Committees on Government Operations the manner in  
9       which its members should be appointed or elected and any other amendments  
10      to its enabling law.

11      Sec. 4. SUNSET OF STATE YOUTH COUNCIL

12      3 V.S.A. chapter 45, subchapter 7 (State Youth Council) is repealed on  
13      February 1, 2025.

14      Sec. 5. EFFECTIVE DATE

15      This act shall take effect on passage.